

Pain In My Heart by **flamehairedwritings**

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: 60s Hopper, 60s Reader, F/M, Light Angst, Swearing, Teenage AU, Teenageness, You know what I mean

Language: English

Characters: Jim "Chief" Hopper, Reader, You

Relationships: Jim "Chief" Hopper/You

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-07-22

Updated: 2018-07-22

Packaged: 2022-04-22 05:15:00

Rating: Mature

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 4,789

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

It's your senior year and your best friend is still a dick. It's your senior year and your best friend is still an ass. It's your senior year and your best friend, Jim Hopper, is still trying to get you to help him with his homework.

Pain In My Heart

Author's Note:

A/N: This was originally requested as a HC, but I realised as I was writing it that it was turning more into a fic than HCs so I thought, heck it, and here we are.

It's your senior year and your best friend is still a dick. It's your senior year and your best friend is still an ass. It's your senior year and your best friend, Jim Hopper, is still trying to get you to help him with his homework.

"No."

"Come on, just start it for me."

"No."

"Just give me a couple of points to write about, then."

"No."

"Come on, sweetheart, I'll-"

"Don't call me that."

"- do anythin' you want. You can't pass up this opportunity. *Anything*."

"No."

"... I'll let you drive my car."

... and still succeeding.

“Really?!” Beaming, your lips parted and your eyes wide, you turn in your chair to look at him.

Leaning against a set of bookshelves, his head dropped to one side, Hopper arches an eyebrow, a corner of his mouth lifting. “Yup. For twenty minutes, in the car park, with my hand on the wheel.”

Your eyes narrow. “For half an hour, your hand on the dashboard.”

His lips twitch. “For twenty-five minutes, my hand on your hand.”

You arch an eyebrow.

Sighing dramatically, Hopper lifts his hands. “Fine, fine, thirty minutes, my hands kept to themselves.”

Your beam returning, with more than a hint of smugness, you turn back in your chair and pat the seat beside you. “Come on, Hopper, there’s a lot to cover.”

“Now, if you just slo-”

“Get your hand off.”

“- Okay, all right, now, if you just *gently* press your foot down on the pedal- Holy *fuck*, I said *gently*-”

“Oh, shit, all right, okay, let me just-”

“- Jesus, don’t fuckin’-”

“Shut *up*, Hopper, I’m trying to concentrate-”

“- kill us, holy shit, I at least wanna fuckin’- *Gently*, oh my God-”

“Stop *yelling* at me and I might be able to do it, James!”

“- *gently*, there we go, there we go, geeently-”

"I *am* doing it gently."

"All right, okay, now just ease round here and, there we go, yep, yes, *yes*, there we go! You did it!"

You grin as you drive into a parking space, then press your foot down onto the brake pedal, both of you jolting slightly as the car comes to an abrupt halt.

"Oh, fuck..."

"... All right, well, we'll work on your braking skills next time."

"How about now?" You turn to him, widening your grin and tilting your head in an effort to persuade him.

Arching an eyebrow, he runs his tongue over his teeth to hide a smile. "Nope, sorry, your thirty minutes are up. In *fact*, you actually got thirty-two minutes which is breaking the terms of our agreement. Now, come on, I'll drive you home- No, do *not* put your foot on that- *Jesus, fuck...!*"

"... So all you really have to do is argue that he *isn't* the hero then your essay will stand out and you'll probably get more marks for that 'cause you're thinking outside the box."

"Mhm."

"... Did you listen to anything I just said?"

"Like, a sentence or two?"

"You're such an *ass*." Darting your hand out, you smack his arm as you fight to suppress a smile.

"*Ow*, don't strike me on your street, what will the neighbours say?" Pulling up outside your house, Hopper arches an eyebrow as a smirk

pulls at his lips, his hand falling from the wheel to his thigh.

“They’ll probably applaud me,” you retort, folding your arms across your chest as you, too, arch an eyebrow.

“Nah, these folks? They love me. You know Mrs Andrews is my biggest fan.”

Snorting, you press your lips together. “She just likes to creepily watch you mow her lawn.”

“Can you blame her?”

Pulling a face, scrunching your nose up, you feign a gag, complete with loud sound effect and your hand flopping out in front of you.

“You’re just jealous, sweetheart-”

You gag again, this time slightly louder and slightly realer. “Urgh, don’t call me that.”

“You wouldn’t be sayin’ that if I was Adam.”

A hot flush spreads across your cheeks as you narrow your eyes at his wide smirk. “Shut up, asshole...” you mutter and, when he opens his mouth, knowing he’s going to tease you some more, you quickly continue, “Do you wanna come in, we can read the chapter for tomorrow if you like or I can get you started on the essay?”

Hopper narrows his eyes slightly as he purses his lips, heaving a great, dramatic sigh. “As much as I’d just love to, I’m meeting some of the guys down at the diner so... No.”

You can’t stop the corners of your mouth from lifting, having already anticipated the answer. “Ah, gee, too bad.” Unbuckling your belt, you gather your folders and bag into your arms before opening the door and stepping out. Pushing the door shut with your hip, you turn and wiggle your fingers in a wave. “I’ll see you tomorrow. Try not to have too much fun.”

Grinning, he winks at you. “Oh, I’ll be on my best behaviour. See ya, sweetheart.”

Scrunching your nose up at the pet name, you're about to turn away when you suddenly remember what you've been meaning to ask him all day. "Oh, hey..." Stepping back towards the car, you lean down to gaze at him. "... What colour tie are you gonna wear?"

Hopper stares at you for a few moments. "... Tie?"

Your lips twitch as you raise your eyebrows. "For the dance?"

"Oh." He shrugs as the startled expression swiftly leaves his features, a rather bemused one now taking its place. "I dunno, I've only got a black one, so, black?"

Nodding a few times, you graze your teeth over your lower lip. "Okay, I can work with that."

"I'm sure you can." Smiling at you as you step away, he raises two fingers from the wheel as you wave again. "All right, see ya."

"See you," you call as you walk backwards a few steps to watch him pull away, before turning and moving towards your house, a smile lingering on your lips.

All you can hear is the sound of pens scratching against paper, pages turning and the occasional book closing. In other words, it's wonderfully peaceful...

Keys clatter down onto the table as the chair next to you scrapes against the wooden floor and someone clears their throat loudly.

"Hey, guess what," Hopper says in a tone decidedly *not* suited for a library.

Not looking up from your book, writing a few words down in your notepad, you answer quietly, hoping he'll take the hint, "What?"

He does not take the hint. "I made out with Chrissy Carpenter last

night.”

“Oh my gosh, that’s *super* exciting, tell me *everything*,” you whisper in a fairly good imitation of the kind of girls Hopper hangs out with, still not looking up.

“Shut up,” he mutters, now deciding to match your tone in his apparent disappointment at your lack of excitement. “It was hot, though. We made out for so long in my car-”

“Please clean it before I next get in it.”

“Nah, Chrissy smells *goood*.”

“Urgh, you’re so gross,” you tut as you turn the page, side-eyeing him.

He laughs under his breath as he starts to play with your pencil case, running the zipper up and down. Then, he suddenly nudges his elbow against your arm like an excited puppy, knocking you and making your pen swerve slightly on the paper, though he ignores your second tut as he leans his elbows on the table and murmurs to you, “Oh, *hey*, and guess what, too, you’re gonna go to the dance with Adam.”

You pause, your pen frozen mid-word as a strange sensation twists your stomach. “What?” you whisper, your gaze darting over to him as your brow furrows in confusion.

The sound of the zipper is suddenly growing very irritating.

“Yeah, you like him, don’t you?” Hopper answers, looking rather pleased with himself as he continues to play with the zipper, oblivious to the grating sound of it. “You did say you would’ve liked to be asked by him. *Well*, Jessica broke up with him last night so he’s obviously not gonna go with her, so I said you were free and you can go with him. He’ll pick you up tomorrow at half seven.”

You stare at him. You almost feel sick. “... I’m free?”

His eyes widen and a *grin* spreads across his lips. “Oh shit, I missed out the second best part, you and Adam *obviously* bein’ the first, Chrissy and I makin’ out bein’ the third, well, Chrissy and I are gonna

go to the dance together, seein' as we're now a couple, and you know what that means, we're gonna have-

The sound of the zipper is *extremely* irritating.

Closing the book swiftly, you grab the pencil case from his hands and start to shove your pens back into it, unable to look at him. "Oh. Okay. All right. That's all sorted, then."

"Hey, where are you goin'?"

"I've got class." You still can't look at him. Getting to your feet, the chair scraping backwards in the process, you gather your notepads and the book into your arms.

"You okay?"

"Yeah, fine. See you later." Turning away, you stride towards the exit as quickly as you can.

You don't know why tears start to prick at your eyes as you hurry out of the library.

You don't know why you stride into a cubicle in the nearest bathroom, slam the door shut and try to cry as quietly as possible.

You don't know why, when you see him, Chrissy, Adam and the rest of his friends at the end of the hall, your chest tightens at the sight of his arm around her and you quickly turn around.

You don't know why you pretend not to hear him calling your name from some distance away as you walk out of school at the end of the day, striding towards the bus.

You don't know why you run straight upstairs to your bedroom, throw your books and bag onto the bed and pace about your room, not knowing what to do with your hands as you fight hard not to cry again, and fail.

You don't know why you're so upset.

Except you do.

And there's no way you can admit it to yourself.

Blowing out a breath, you drop your arms to your sides and lift your chin. Turning your body slightly, you inspect yourself in the mirror.

The thick neckline of the satin dress sweeps around your shoulders, baring them, and clings to your torso before falling away at your waist to your knees in an A-line style. It's a light lavender colour, not usually what you'd go for but it was the only suitable dress in your size at the thrift shop you'd looked in a few weeks ago, so you'd had to make do.

You were going to wrap a thin black belt around your waist and accessorise with black earrings and bracelets you had, but that was when you were going with Hopper. Adam is wearing a red tie, as you had found out earlier that day when you'd had to nearly run after him after the one class you shared ended.

You realise, as you gaze at the belt around your waist, that lavender and red do not go well together.

Exhaling a long breath, you adjust your hair and rub your lips together, smoothing out the red lipstick you'd chosen that you hope will balance it out. You're no professional at make-up, though; hell, it took you nearly twenty minutes to get the flicks of your eyeliner even, so you have absolutely no idea if it does.

A blast of a car horn outside pulls your attention from your reflection and your insecurities. Frowning, after a brief moment a smile suddenly lifts your lips as hope starts to rise within you.

Darting around your bed, you pull the curtains back and gaze down at the street below.

Your heart sinks.

It's not Hopper.

Pressing your lips together, you watch Adam lean back in his chair as he gazes down the street, tapping his fingers against the steering wheel in time to the music coming from the radio.

A few months ago you would've given anything for this.

Letting the curtains fall, you move over to your bag and slip your feet into your black, kitten heels. Straightening your back and lifting your chin, you take a breath, then head out of your bedroom.

The ride to school is agony.

You'd thought Adam would talk non-stop about something you'd pretend to be interested in as he never seemed to stop talking in class or with his friends. You thought he'd at least try and impress you by talking about his car, Hopper had told you how much he loves it, or about his weekend job, but, no.

Instead, you both sit in silence.

For the first few minutes you'd attempted to make conversation, complimenting his suit and asking about his day and if he was looking forward to the dance, and he'd given, at most, a five word answer. Eventually, you'd given up prompting him, his disinterest evident.

You can't help but take it personally. You feel stupid for doing so, telling yourself you're better than this, that it shouldn't matter, and, besides, he *must* have agreed to go with you for a reason. He is, after all, as stupid as it is, popular, so why would he damage his reputation by being seen with you? You're not exactly a nobody, but you're definitely not the kind of girl he's usually associated with.

Unless... Oh God, had Hopper *made* him? Had he practically *begged* him to take you after he'd decided not to go with you, out of guilt or pity?

You want to go home. You really, *really* want to go home.

However, Adam is already turning into a space in the school car park, and it's just too humiliating to ask him to take you home now. Looking up at the school and the couples and groups heading inside, your stomach starts to twist into knots.

"Let's go." Adam's half-way out of the car when he speaks.

Unbuckling your belt, you grab your bag and push the door open, stepping out.

One hour. You just have to stay for one hour then you can find a ride home, after you've shown your face and held your head high. Make yourself proud for one hour.

Following after Adam, you keep your gaze ahead, fixed on the doors. Back straight, chin up, arms by your sides, your bag gripped tightly in your hand. You can already hear the music from the hall before you step through the doors, accompanied by the sounds of laughter and many conversations. It only gets noisier the closer you get; it's loud and constant but it's a distraction, which is good.

Managing to keep in step with Adam, you enter the hall. The dance officially started over half an hour ago but it's already in full swing. You automatically scan the room, spotting familiar faces and smiling lightly at a few whose eyes you meet.

"John!"

You jerk slightly. Turning your head, you find Adam, grinning for the first time that evening, with his arm raised, hailing the attention of his friends. Suppressing a sigh, you follow him over to the group. Quickly scanning them, you don't see Hopper or Chrissy.

Good.

You had successfully avoided Hopper all day, and you plan on doing the same for the rest of the evening. Just introduce yourself, say a few nice comments, then pretend you need to go to the bathroom. That's it.

Adam claps his friends on the back as you join them and you smile politely at the girls as the boys talk over one another, each trying to be the funniest.

The girls murmur to one another, looking rather bored, and you feel a strange sense of solidarity.

“I like your dress,” one of them, Maria, if you remember correctly, says to you with a gentle smile, and you feel your mood start to lift a little.

You’re about to thank her and return the compliment when the boys cheer collectively and call out.

“Hey!”

“Over here!”

“Hop!”

You freeze.

The girls faces light up as Chrissy appears at your side and suddenly the group splits in two; the girls gather close together and giggle as the boys clap each other on the back (*what is that about?*) and laugh loudly. You don’t know what to do with yourself, clutching your bag tightly as you stare at the floor.

“Ladies, ladies, you look in-credible.”

You can’t stop your gaze from lifting at the sound of his voice.

“Though not as good as me which is-” Hopper trails off as he finally sees you. “... Good.”

The girls roll their eyes or giggle depending upon their level of resistance to Hopper’s charms and the boys make a show of smacking his shoulder and putting their arms around their girls, leading them away to the drinks table close by.

Hopper only barely registers them, his gaze travelling over you. “Wow, you look really-”

"Come on, Hop, I wanna see those moves," Chrissy grins as she wraps her hands around his arm and tugs, trying to pull him towards the dance floor.

"Yeah, sweetheart, I'm comin'," Hopper keeps his eyes on you as he lets her tug him a couple of steps. "Let me just-"

"Excuse me, I'm just..." Turning to find that Adam has also left, you begin to make your excuse to thin air. Swallowing, your cheeks burning, your gaze flicks up to Hopper then to Chrissy before down to the floor. "... Excuse me."

Walking away, your pace quickens the closer you get to the doors, pushing past small groups of students as you go. Striding through the doors, you curse yourself as tears begin to prick at your eyes, too many emotions starting to rage within you. Turning down a hallway, you don't even think about where you're going, just walking and wanting to get *away*.

Then, you hear your name and footsteps, the sounds echoing down the empty hall.

"Hey..." As he reaches you, Hopper grips your arm gently and tries to turn you.

Pulling away from his grasp, you grit your teeth tightly as you finally face him, trying desperately hard to fight any more tears from forming.

He frowns at your hostility, his eyes darting over your features. "What's goin' on? What's wrong?"

"Nothing, I'm fine."

He presses his lips together. "I'm not stupid, sweetheart-"

"Don't call me that," you cut him off sharply, your skin prickling.

His jaw clenches as he raises his arms slightly, his gentle concern giving way to irritation. "Why are you so mad? I thought you'd be happy, you came with Adam-"

“And he’s an absolutely *boring* bastard, Jim, and you know he is and you *still* set me up with him!”

“What?” His concern returns in an instant as he steps towards you. “Did somethin’ happen-”

You step back, struggling with the words you want to say and the ones you don’t. “No, he’s just a, he’s, he’s nothing, okay, he’s nothing to me.”

Confusion spread across Hopper’s features as he steps towards you again. “What? You’ve had a crush on Adam for years, I thought you’d be fuckin’ *thanking* me-”

Anger surges within you. “Oh, so I should be thanking you for being a last minute, fucking *substitutedate* for your pal, Jim, just because *you* decided you wanted to fuck a girl off your list.”

You continue as he stares at you, the words tumbling out.

“Do you have any idea how humiliating this has been for me? You know I hate these things, Jim, you *know* I do, I only wanted to come to this because *you* fucking convinced me, *you* said I should push myself, that it’d be fine, that *you’d* be here with me and you weren’t, Jim.” You ignore the slight crack in your voice, and the blurring of your eyes with tears. “Yes, I liked Adam, yes, I would have been happy to have gone with him at some point, but only if he’d asked and never over you. You’re my best friend, Jim, it’s *always* going to be you over everyone and I thought it was the same for you but it’s clearly not and that, that’s...” You have to stop as you inhale a sharp breath, uncaring as the tears now start to fall. “You didn’t even give me a second thought. Do you know how much that hurts? No, of course you don’t, God...” You angrily swipe your tears from your cheeks. “... This shouldn’t matter, this really shouldn’t matter. This isn’t me. I can’t stop you from doing what you want and I...” Shaking your head, you can’t look at him anymore. “Just go back to your friends, Hopper.”

Wiping at your cheeks again, you watch him open his mouth and shake your head fiercely. “No, Hopper, I don’t, I don’t want to talk to you right now, okay, just go back to your friends.”

“Sweetheart-”

“*Don’t* call me that,” you snap, your voice rising.

Throwing his arms up, Hopper tries to channel his frustration. “Why? What’s your fuckin’ problem with it?”

“Because it’s what you call *them*, Hopper,” you answer tightly even as your features crumble slightly. “All those girls you see that you don’t give a shit about, it’s what you call them, and I don’t... I don’t want to be one of those girls.”

He stares at you.

Suddenly, he’s holding your wrist and pulling you into the nearest classroom, shoving the door open.

“Jim-” you begin to hiss as he releases you and shuts the door, plunging the room into semi-darkness.

Spinning around, he stays where he is, his jaw clenched. “Will you just shut up and listen to me-”

“No, why should I?”

“Because I want to explain-”

“Well, I don’t want to hear it-”

“Well, you’re gonna,” he cuts you off, his tone leaving no room for argument, his eyes boring into you. “You’re gonna fuckin’ shut up and listen for once in your damn life. I really thought you’d be happy to go with Adam, okay, you’ve had a crush on him since we were seven years old. Yeah, he’s boring as shit but he’s a safe and decent guy.” His eyes flash slightly as you snort and drop your bag onto a desk, folding your arms across your chest. “He is. He’d never hurt you or yell at you, all right, he’s a good guy and that’s what you deserve.” He shakes his head as he runs his tongue over his teeth, taking an almost involuntary step towards you. “But, yeah, he is boring as shit. Do you know how hard it’s been to see you pining after him?”

You still as confusion passes over you, and he continues, taking another step closer, “I know I shouldn’t have set you up with him without asking-”

“Set me up?” Your anger quickly returns. “You didn’t set me up, you just palmed me off onto him out of guilt and pity, and I can’t decide which one’s worse.”

Hopper runs a hand down his mouth in frustration as he shakes his head. “It *wasn’t* out of guilt or pity, I really, *truly* thought you’d be happy and that’s all I want for you. All I want is for you to be happy.”

The look in his eye is unfamiliar, but you’re too hurt and angry to dwell on it. “That is such bullshit, Hopper, stop trying to cover your own ass out of some twisted sense of loyalty.”

He raises his hands as he stares at you. “What the hell are you talkin’ about?”

You clench your fists as the mounting insecurities that had circulated in your head for the last few months spill out unchecked. “Why do you still hang out with me, Hopper? I’m not... This group you’re with, you have so much fun with them. You tell me all the time how fun they are, how great they are, what’s the point in me, then?”

He continues to stare, almost at a loss for words, and you can’t stop. “You know, when you said you’d come with me I thought that I was just being stupid, that of course you like me and we’ll always be friends, but... School’s over soon, Hop, and... What do we have after that? I want to get out of Hawkins and, I’m, I’m not... I’m not like them, I’m not fun, I don’t... I know it happens after school, people drift apart, but I can’t... I don’t... You know everything about me, you know *me*, and I can’t... I *know* this happens but I can’t...”

You don’t realise you’ve been crying until you stop and finally register the wetness on your cheeks.

Looking down, your shoes are a blurred mess as you stare at them through your tears.

Then, he's there.

His arm slides around your waist as the hand on the other cups the back of your neck, drawing you into him. Closing your eyes, your arms wrap around him as you rest your cheek against his chest, your breaths shaky.

"I'm sorry," he murmurs against your hair, his finger tips gently stroking soothing circles. "I'm so sorry, I should've... Shit, I should've done so many things differently. I'm so sorry."

Your grip on him tightens as you swallow hard and begin to whisper, "I'm sorry, too, I didn't-

"Hey, no..." Sliding his hand from the back of your neck to your cheek, he gently lifts your head and you open your eyes, meeting his gaze. "... You don't have anythin' to apologise for, all right? I want-"

"No, I was being stupid, Hop, I-

"You are not stupid, okay, I want-"

"I am, this is so stupid-"

"You're not, I think that-"

"I am, I so am-"

"Jesus Christ, do you ever shut up?"

You blink at him, then your lips twitch. "No."

Arching an eyebrow, he has to fight off his own smile. "Just shut up and listen. Christ. I..." Hopper trails off as he suddenly looks *nervous*. His shoulders lift slightly as he gazes at you and his thumb strokes over your cheek.. "I've been meaning to tell you somethin'. Been meaning to tell you for a while, actually, but there wasn't, well, there was a right time, there was lots of right times but I, well, I was too fuckin' terrified." He exhales a small laugh, his tongue running over his teeth. "... I like you."

You freeze.

"I like you a lot," he murmurs, watching you intently. "I don't just wanna be your best friend. I get it, though, I get it if you don't want that, I'm a complete ass and I'm not the best of guys, I know I should have said this so much sooner, but, fuck, I'm, I know how you must think I am with girls but I won't ever treat you like that, I mean, I *do* treat them well, okay, I'm not a creep, but I'd do anythin' for you, okay, every time I see you I feel like my heart's gonna fuckin' burst out of my chest, but I didn't think you'd feel the same and I can't lose you, I can't lose this, what we have, but I just had to say this, finally."

He's rambling nervously and you can't stop staring at him.

Swallowing hard, he exhales another, anxious laugh. "Come on, you gotta say somethin'. Even just—"

"Yes."

"... What?"

Your heart is pounding but the corners of your mouth are lifting and you're nodding. "Yes, I like you, too, Hopper."

Raising his eyebrows, both his hands cup your cheeks as he searches your gaze. "Holy shit, are you serious?"

"Yeah, I'm serious, you ass." You're smiling widely now, your hands settling on his chest.

He doesn't move for a few moments, just gazes at you. Then, he's lowering his head and capturing your lips in a tender kiss. You can't describe the feeling that rises and spreads within you as you slide your arms around his neck and your lips move gently against his; all you know is that it feels *right*.

It's several moments before he breaks the kiss and leans his forehead against yours, neither of you opening your eyes.

"Wow..." he murmurs, his thumbs stroking along your cheekbones.

You can't help the shy smile that lifts your lips

“... You know, you could’ve said something sooner, too-”

Your shyness instantly disappears.

“Oh my God, Hopper, just shut up and kiss me again.”

“Gladly.”
